

3.2.2 Mineral Resources

Numerous mineral resources and mineral resource extraction sites are found throughout the project area in the County of San Diego (County). The region's mineral resources serve a variety of functions, such as public, commercial, scientific, and recreational uses. A significant impact would occur if the proposed project results in the loss of a known or locally important mineral resource.

3.2.2.1 Analysis of Project Effects

Small Turbine(s) and MET Facilities

Small wind turbines and Meteorological Testing (MET) facilities may be located within a region where geologic information indicates significant mineral deposits are present as identified on the County's Mineral Resources Map. These facilities may be located on land that has any of the following Mineral Land Classifications, as identified in the *Update of Mineral Land Classification: Aggregate Materials in the Western San Diego Production-Consumption Region* (DOC 1997): Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ)-1, which is land located within an area where geologic information indicates no significant mineral deposits are present; MRZ-2, which is an area of "Identified Mineral Resource Significance"; or MRZ-3, which is an area of undetermined mineral resources. Based on the scale of future projects, the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments will not result in the future inaccessibility for recovery of the on-site mineral resources. Future small wind turbines and MET facilities would not involve major grading or dredging activities that would result in the loss of a significant mineral resource. Some small wind turbines would be roof mounted and would not result in any ground disturbance. Other small turbines or MET facilities may require earthwork activities consisting of minor grading to level the surface for the construction of towers and concrete foundations. Therefore, no potentially significant loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region and the residents of the state will occur as a result of this project.

The proposed project would not introduce incompatible uses, as the uses are currently allowed under the existing Zoning Ordinance. Quarries and other extraction operation sites would not be locations for future small wind turbines or MET facilities. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of the availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. Furthermore, the proposed project does not involve extractive uses that would impact mineral resources.

As a result, implementation of the proposed project would not adversely affect the availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region or the state, or result in the loss of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Impacts to mineral resources related to small wind turbines and MET facilities would be **less than significant**.

Large Turbine(s)

The proposed project amends certain provisions of the County's Zoning Ordinance related to large turbine(s). These updates are necessary to address advancements in technology that have obviated many of the current provisions. The proposed amendments related to large wind turbines consist of updated definitions and requirements related to setbacks, noise, height, and locations where large turbines are permissible. All future large turbine projects will be subject to discretionary review and required to obtain a Major Use Permit. As part of the County's discretionary review process, all future projects would be evaluated under the California Environmental Quality Act and would be required to implement measures to minimize impacts to mineral resources, as necessary. Additionally, if a future large wind turbine project is located near or within an area that contains mineral resources, a mineral resources technical report may be required at the discretion of the County. The technical report would assess the site-specific conditions and include mitigation measures, as necessary. Therefore, due to the Major Use Permit discretionary review process required for all future large wind turbine projects, the project would result in **less-than-significant impacts** to mineral resources.

3.2.2.2 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative impacts to mineral resources may result from the loss of a known or locally important mineral resource. The geographic scope for this cumulative analysis is the San Diego region, which encompasses the entire County, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas, as well as surrounding counties, and tribal and public agency lands. The California Geological Survey has classified land into MRZs in Riverside County, Orange County, and the incorporated cities in the County of San Diego, just as they have for the unincorporated County of San Diego. These adjacent jurisdictions have included protections in their general plans or other planning documents to protect these and other mineral resources.

Planned and projected growth in the region, however, may result in a reasonably foreseeable loss of mineral resources due to the encroachment of incompatible uses that would limit future areas from being permitted for mining operations. For example, the Merriam Mountains General Plan Amendment in the Bonsall Community Planning Area (CPA), which is included in the cumulative project list in Table 1-4e, Private Project Not Included in the General Plan Update, is a private project that proposes over 2,000 dwelling units in an area that has been classified as containing known mineral resources (MRZ-2). The development of this residential project would preclude the extraction of mineral resources on this site. It is reasonably foreseeable that other cumulative projects in the region may also result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources. Therefore, cumulative projects in the region would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact associated with mineral resources.

As described in Section 3.2.2.1, the proposed project would not result in impacts to mineral resources. Therefore, the proposed project **would not contribute to a cumulative impact** that would adversely affect mineral resources.

3.2.2.3 Mitigation Measures

The proposed project will not result in any significant impacts to mineral resources, and no mitigation measures are required.

3.2.2.4 Conclusion

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant impacts associated with mineral resources. The proposed project would not result in the loss of a known or locally important mineral resource.

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